



# *The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

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### **Patrick Administration Funds River Restoration, Access Projects**

BOSTON – Eight projects to restore river habitat and flow, enhance public access, and encourage land protection along rivers from the Berkshires to the Merrimack Valley will receive FY 2008 grants through the Department of Fish and Game's Riverways Program, Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles announced today.

"These grants to communities and local environmental organizations are investments in the future of our ecological infrastructure," Secretary Bowles said. "This funding is crucial to local efforts to improve river water quality and stream flow, aquatic habitat, and public awareness of the challenges we face in trying to protect the Commonwealth's rivers and streams."

Grants awarded today come from Riverways' Stream Team Implementation Awards and Rivers Instream Flow Stewards (RIFLS) restoration programs.

"We are pleased to be able to assist cities and towns, watershed associations, land trusts, and other environmental organizations in their efforts to protect Massachusetts's rivers," Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Mary Griffin said. "Riverways' work is all about partnerships and restoration of river habitat and aquatic-dependent species, and these grant awards will further enhance these partnerships and our efforts to improve river habitat and flow."

Celebrating its 20th anniversary, Riverways' Adopt-A-Stream Program supports citizen-driven river stewardship efforts by involving volunteers, communities and businesses and leveraging in-kind work and funding on behalf of rivers and their surrounding habitats. Adopt-A-Stream works with citizens to support and develop projects in watersheds across the state that restore habitat and natural stream structure, protect flow, and identify and prevent non-point source pollution. The program provides a suite of monitoring and restoration tools that help citizens become active stewards of their watersheds.

Adopt-A-Stream selected the following projects for FY 2008 Stream Team Implementation Awards:

**Hoosic River Watershed Association, South Branch Stream Team: \$2,780**

- The Hoosic River Watershed Association will recruit and train volunteers to create a Stream Team for the South Branch of the Hoosic River. The association will provide training workshops for surveying and sampling, and support the Stream Team in actions to solve problems found during the volunteer survey.

**Town of Reading, Ipswich River Greenway Feasibility Study: \$3,050**

- The town of Reading and the Reading/North Reading Stream Team will work with a wetland consultant to conduct an environmental impact and feasibility study for a trail as part of the Ipswich River Greenway. The study will assess the ecological footprint, cost and feasibility of building a boardwalk on this section of the Greenway.

**Greater Northfield Watershed Association, Northfield Stream Team and River Access Project: \$2,859**

- The Greater Northfield Watershed Association will develop Stream Teams for East Wait/Bennett Brook, Mill Brook, Millers/Roaring Brook and Louisiana/Pauchaug Brook in Northfield. As part of the grant, the association and Stream Teams will also refurbish fencing and benches and add an interpretive sign to the King Phillip's Hill historic property. Another part of the project will promote the group's anti-dumping campaign.

**East Quabbin Land Trust, Ecological Assessment of the Moose Brook Valley: \$5,000**

- Following up on a Shoreline Survey, the East Quabbin Land Trust will complete ecological assessments and engage in direct communication with owners of priority lands in the Moose Brook watershed of Hardwick and Barre. The group will host a follow-up forum where information will be shared with landowners.

**Blackstone River Watershed Association, Municipal Outreach Project: \$4,500**

- The Blackstone River Watershed Association will work with a part-time municipal outreach coordinator to bring the results of recent Stream Team Shoreline Surveys to the attention of local town boards. To reach out to land owners and residents, the association will develop a brochure describing how to keep local streams and water bodies clean and healthy. To reach out to businesses, the group will incorporate findings into its "In Business for the Blackstone" program.

**Merrimack River Watershed Council, Merrimack River Shoreline Survey Project: \$10,000**

- As part of its efforts to restore the water quality of the Merrimack River and to find sources of pollution, the Merrimack River Watershed Council will recruit and train volunteers to join Stream Teams to assess the 46 miles of the main stem of the Merrimack River in Massachusetts, from the New Hampshire line to Newburyport.

**Massachusetts Watershed Coalition, Monoosnoc Brook Restoration Project: \$1,810**

- The Monoosnoc Brook Greenway Project, the Massachusetts Watershed Coalition and the Leominster Land Trust will contact private owners to seek conservation agreements that will preserve land and allow for the creation of a streamside trail to connect the Monoosnoc Hills trail system with the Nashua River Greenway. The groups will prepare a conceptual design and educational brochure for the Greenway Trail.

The RIFLS program assists groups interested in protecting and restoring more natural flow regimes to their rivers by collecting stream flow data, assessing the extent of flow alteration and restoring more natural flows where necessary. The RIFLS Restoration Award was established this year to accomplish two goals: to help RIFLS groups use their stream flow data to take the next steps toward restoring more natural flow regimes, and to encourage mutually beneficial partnerships between local environmental groups and municipalities. The following group received this year's first-ever RIFLS Restoration Award:

**Parker River Clean Water Association (PRCWA): \$35,000**

- This award will assist the association in conducting an Ecological Safe Yield Analysis of the town of Georgetown's well field, the primary source of Georgetown's public water supply. The PRCWA is taking on this project with the cooperation and support of several town boards. Past studies have pointed to Georgetown's municipal water supply withdrawals from the well field as one of the most likely causes of observed declines in stream flow in the adjacent Parker River system. Hydrologic modeling by the Horsley Witten Group will help to determine the amount of water that can be withdrawn from the town's wells while maintaining adequate streamflow to sustain the ecological integrity of the Parker River.

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